

CITY OF ROCKVILLE PLANNING DIVISION STAFF REPORT

January 31, 2001

SUBJECT:

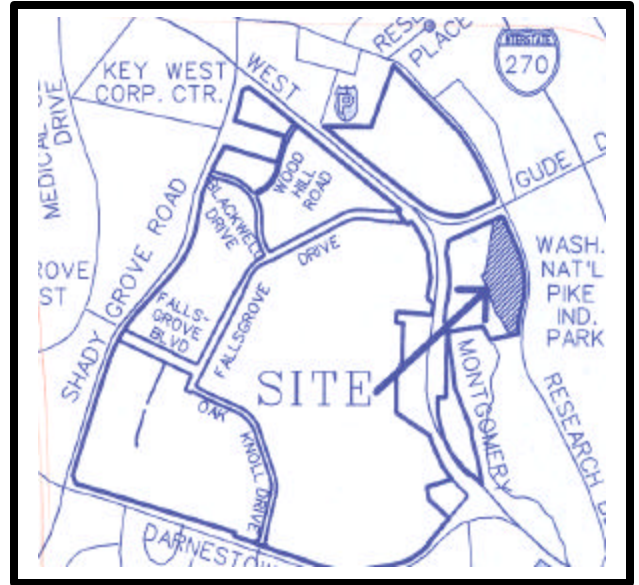
Detailed Application CPD2000-0004I for
Comprehensive Planned Development
CPD1999-0004, Fallsgrove

Applicant: Fallsgrove Office Group, LLC
c/o The Cox Companies
8381 Old Courthouse Road, #160
Vienna, VA 22182

Owner: Fallsgrove Office Group, LLC

Date Filed: August 29, 2000

Location: A portion of the Fallsgrove development, near
the intersection of Research Boulevard and Gude Drive.



REQUEST:

The applicant seeks detailed (final) approval for a 210,981 square foot office building and a four-story parking structure on 6.54 acres of land at the southeast corner of the intersection of Research Boulevard and Gude Drive.



PREVIOUS RELATED ACTIONS:

- CPD99-0004, Concept Plan Application for Comprehensive Planned Development approved by the Mayor and Council, February 22, 2000.
- CDP2000-0004A through H, Detailed Applications for Comprehensive Planned Development CPD99-0004. All approved by the Planning Commission.

ANALYSIS:

Background

On February 22, 2000, the Mayor and Council approved CPD99-0004, authorizing development on the former Thomas Farm site, now known as Fallsgrove. The approval authorized a total of 1,530 dwelling units, 150,000 square feet of commercial retail and 950,000 square feet of office/research and development space. A Comprehensive Planned Development is implemented through the

approval of individual detailed applications for all or part of a development as required in Section 25-656 of the Zoning Ordinance. This application is part of a series of detailed applications.

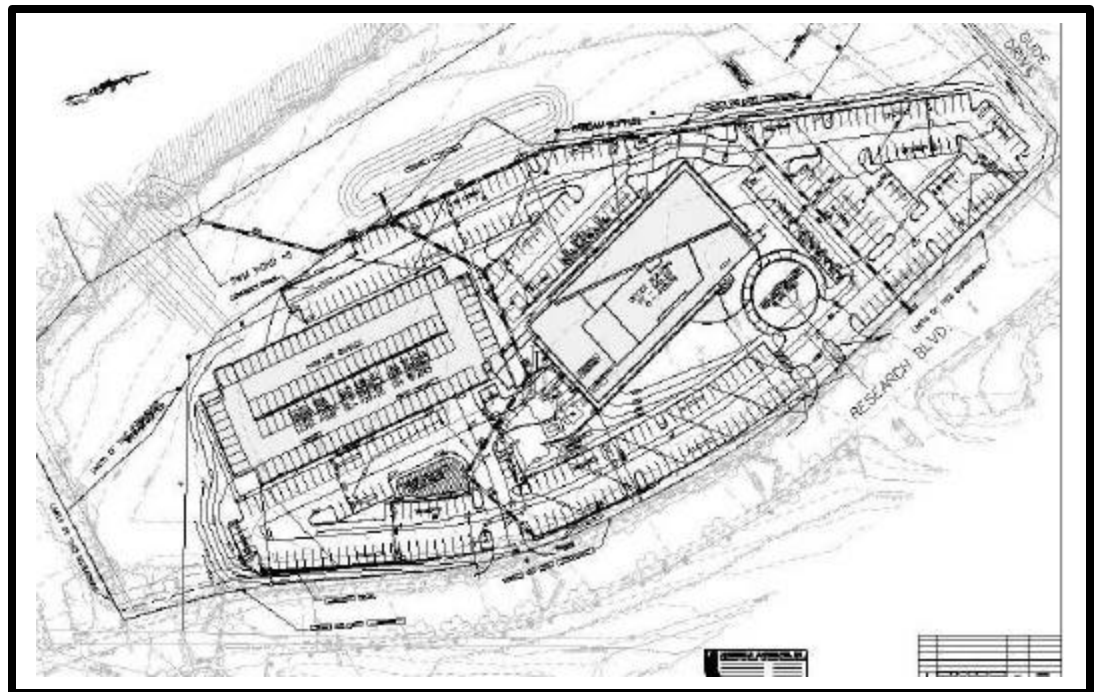
Property Description

Fallsgrove consists of approximately 254 acres bounded by Shady Grove Road, Darnestown Road, West Montgomery Avenue and Research Boulevard. The topography of this site gently slopes from the corner of Gude and Research Boulevard down and diagonally across the site down towards a stream adjacent to West Montgomery Avenue, essentially creating the highest part of the site at Gude and Research.

Proposal

The applicant requests detailed application approval of a 210,981 square foot office building called the Fallsgrove Corporate Center. The applicant is also requesting the ability to place up to 2,500 square-feet of ancillary retail within the building, such as a coffee shop or small deli. The Fallsgrove resolution of approval allows up to 10,000 aggregate square feet of retail within the office buildings of Fallsgrove.

The building is an eight-story class A office building that will also have a four-story parking deck. The parking deck and surface parking will provide 798 spaces. The total number of spaces required for this site is 694.



The Site

The development site is located generally at the intersection of Research Boulevard and Gude Drive, in an area designated on the Concept Plan as Class A office development. This particular site is somewhat removed from the balance of the Fallsgrove site due to its location on Research Boulevard. Although this location is in the midst of development characterized by I-3 zoning, the project is subject to all of the terms, conditions and requirements of the Fallsgrove CPD. Some of these provisions include 25% open space, providing Fallsgrove Design bus shelters and placing the building as close to the street as practical to foster pedestrian accessibility.

This office building is setback 109 feet from Research Boulevard at its closest point. The building is not parallel to Research Boulevard, but slightly offset, with the setbacks increasing toward the rear of the site and the parking deck. This orientation also decreases the visual presence of the parking

structure from Research Boulevard. Owing to the fact that there is a stream adjacent to West Montgomery, the building is at least 500 feet from West Montgomery Avenue. The building is oriented in a way that provides its predominant presence on Research Boulevard. Visual site lines of the building are enhanced by the building and garage being offset from each other, with the garage

being setback from the office building and slightly askew from parallel.



Access to the site is provided from two entrances off of Research Boulevard. The first access point, which is a formal ceremonial entrance, is just to the south of Gude Drive. This entrance is characterized by a decorative circular drive

that accesses surface parking around the main entrance lobby of the building. This entrance also provides access to surface parking and the garage parking on the south side of the site, as well as to surface parking on the north side. This access also leads to parking to the rear of the site, behind the main building. The second access point, which is to the south of the first entry point, aligns directly with the parking structure, as well as accessing some surface parking on the south of the site. The parking structure is four stories tall and will have a covered pedestrian access to the building.

As previously stated, there is a stream adjacent to West Montgomery that will have a series of in-line stormwater management (SWM) ponds that were approved as part of the Falls Grove Concept Plan. These ponds will serve not only this site, but will provide regional stormwater management. Pond 4, which will be located north of Gude Drive, will accommodate 110 acres, of which 79 acres will be offsite drainage. Pond 5, which is adjacent to this application, will provide drainage for approximately 79 offsite acres and 46 acres associated with Falls Grove. When combined with the existing National Capital Research Pond (NCRP) at the intersection of West Montgomery Avenue and Darnestown Road that is being retrofitted, the in-line ponds will serve approximately 300 acres, of which 46 acres will be associated with Falls Grove. Design of these ponds will be coordinated with the State. As part of this application, the Applicant is providing a water quality facility on-site that will be adjacent to Pond 5. This on-site facility is located behind the main building.

Architecture

This building is contemporary in design. Construction materials will consist of pre-cast concrete, non-reflective tinted glass, and some design elements that will be aluminum, including a series of banding elements and a spire on the north east corner of the building. This spire will run up the side of the building and protrude slightly above the roofline. In addition, there will be an architectural "wing wall" that will protrude perpendicular from the building façade and run up and over the roofline, creating a screen wall on the roof. This wall will be of a metal finish material, with a rose

colored tint. Imbedded within this wall will be a series of low wattage blue lights that will serve as an architectural enhancement. The parking garage will share design characteristics with the building.

Staff believes the scale and mass of the building are appropriate. Surrounding buildings are a significant distance away, preventing any streetscape conflicts or glaring design inconsistencies. As previously stated, the surrounding development on Research Boulevard is characterized by I-3 zoning. The layouts of these buildings typically have more significant setbacks than this application. However, the setbacks of this proposal are consistent with the Concept Plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Approval is recommended, subject to the following conditions:



1. Submission, for approval by the Chief of Planning, of eleven (11) copies of the site plan, revised according to Planning Commission Exhibit A.
2. Submission, for approval by the Department of Public Works (DPW), of the following detailed plans, studies and computations:
 - a. Stormwater Management (SWM) concept plan.
 - b. Sediment control plans.
 - c. Public Improvement plans (water and sewer, storm drain and paving, street tree and lighting).
 - d. Any additional notes on the plans.
 - e. Public improvements for Research Boulevard entrances.
3. Bonds be posted and permits obtained from DPW and MDE.
4. Submission for the approval of the Chief of Planning, of 11 copies of a Landscape Plan that is revised according to Planning Commission Exhibit B.

5. Applicant will construct the sanitary sewer line, as approved in the October 3 letter to Loiederman Associates. Proposed sanitary sewer should not conflict with SWM quality facility and should be in a public easement.
6. Obtain State approval for regional SWM pond prior to issuance of Occupancy permits.
7. Revise the limit of application to include the water quality facility. This facility must be in an easement located on the site.
8. Provide only one connection for water. Water meter should be located in the island as marked on Planning Commission Exhibit A.
9. Remove parking spaces as indicated on Exhibit A for 16-foot deep spaces to allow for two-foot vehicle overhang. Sidewalks must be six-feet wide when perpendicular to 16-foot spaces.
10. Applicant will construct bike path along West Gude Drive as indicated on Exhibit A.
11. Show car pool spaces and bike rack locations.
12. Staff will install Falls Grove design bus shelters and relocate as necessary to avoid potential conflicts with exit driveway from site.
13. The three off-site water system improvements, as identified in the June 23 letter to Cox Companies, must be constructed prior to issuance of Occupancy permits. Additionally, the PWK permit to construct the off-site water system must be issued prior to the PWK permit issuance for the office building construction.
14. All utility connections and transformers will be placed underground, and connections to the existing utility system must be shown.
15. Any other notes indicated on Exhibit A.

TRANSPORTATION

Traffic

A traffic study was done as part of the Concept Plan approval, and this application is in compliance with the approved Concept Plan. Mitigation of the traffic impacts were required as part of the Concept Plan. Mitigation measures include the construction of improvements to 12 intersections, construction of a transit center, payment of \$1.6 million for Transportation Demand Management (TDM) measures, and construction of on-site roads.

The Applicant has provided a bond in the amount of \$2.2 million for required off-site traffic improvements, as per the requirements of the Concept Plan.

Parking

This proposal requires 694 parking spaces. This application proposes a total of 798 spaces, which is 104 spaces above the requirement. Parking will be provided in the form of 348 surface spaces and the balance provided in the garage. This total includes 18 handicap accessible spaces.

The parking garage associated with his application will be connected to the office building via a covered pedestrian access, which in turn leads to the main corridor of the building.

As part of the Concept plan, the building must provide car pool spaces as indicated on Planning Commission Exhibit A.

Pedestrian Access and Bicycle Paths

Although removed from the balance of the Fallsgrove site, the Applicant will construct a portion of the Fallsgrove bike path system along Gude Drive. This path connects to the Fallsgrove system across West Montgomery Avenue in the general vicinity of the proposed recreation center. The path will continue along Gude Drive, cross Research Boulevard, and continue east.

The Applicant will provide a marked pedestrian access from the main lobby of the building, adjacent to the main entrance, and out to Research Boulevard. At the terminus at West Montgomery, the Applicant will provide a bus shelter that is compatible with the shelter approved through the Fallsgrove Design Guidelines.

Transit

The City is working with the Applicant, the developers of Fallsgrove and Montgomery County to create bus transit routes through the community. In addition, there is a multi-modal transportation center approved as part of the Village Center that will serve as the focal point of transit services within this development.

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Stormwater runoff for this site will be conveyed to an on-site water quality facility that will in turn convey water to the previously referenced in-line water quality pond within the stream to the rear of this site. These ponds will also handle regional stormwater runoff as approved by the Concept Plan. The State has tentatively approved the design of this stormwater facility, and must officially sign off on the design of the facility as part of this application.

LANDSCAPING

A landscape plan for this development has been submitted and is under review per the requirements of condition number four (4) noted above. A requirement of the Concept Plan states that an office development such as this must provide at least 25% of the site as open space. This application is providing approximately 33% open space.

Forest/Tree Preservation

See condition number four (4).

Equipment Screening

All of the electrical transformers for this site will be provided underground. There is, however, an emergency generator adjacent to a loading dock on the south side of this application. The generator will be enclosed on two sides through the utilization of a retaining wall that will have architectural characteristics of the building. The third side will be screened with the wall of the building. To the loading dock side, the generator will be screened through the use of significant landscaping. The retaining wall will be screened with significant landscaping as well.

All transformers or telecommunications equipment is required by the City of Rockville to be placed underground. Any equipment that the applicant proposes to place above ground must be approved in accordance with the submission and approval of a waiver of the city's underground utility requirements. This waiver must be approved by the City of Rockville Planning Commission.

MAYOR AND COUNCIL COMMENTS ON FALLSGROVE CORPORATE CENTER

As per the Concept Plan and Resolution of approval for Fallsgrove, the Mayor and Council reviewed this application, without further public hearing, to comment on the architecture and site design. The Mayor and Council endorsed this application and expressed no concern over the site design or architecture.

STAFF COMMENTS

This application is consistent with the approved Concept Plan, and staff recommends approval subject to the conditions listed earlier. Staff finds that the layout of the site, the architecture and the scale and massing are functional and appropriate and is within the spirit of the Concept Plan. The architecture associated with this building and garage will create a unique and significant presence on Research Boulevard.

It is Staff's opinion that the site will relate well to the Fallsgrove development and the types of buildings located on Research Boulevard. Staff endorses this application as meeting the full intent of the approved Concept Plan and the accompanying resolution.

NOTIFICATION

Notices were sent to approximately 1,650 residences, businesses and association presidents. Some of the subdivisions include, but were not limited to, Glenora Hills, Rockshire, the Willows, Carter Hill, Watts Branch Meadows, Cambridge Heights, Ivy Woods and Flintledge Estates.

APPROVAL LIMITATIONS

Section 25-193(d) of the Zoning Ordinance requires that **construction or operation must commence within two (2) years of the date of this decision or application approval shall expire.**

If the applicant can show just cause, a maximum of two (2) time extensions may be granted by the Planning Commission, each not to exceed one year. However, time extensions are not automatically approved, and sufficient detail and justification will be required in order for the Planning Commission to consider granting an extension.

CONCLUSION

It is Staff's opinion that this application is consistent with the approved Concept Plan approved by the Mayor and Council for this area of Fallsgrove. As a result, staff recommends approval of Detailed Application CPD2000-0004I.

Attachments